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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 001714

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [RS](#)  
SUBJECT: MEDVEDEV'S NEW EUROPEAN SECURITY TREATY?

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[1](#)B. BERLIN 0755

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Daniel Russell: Reasons 1.4 (b, d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Deputy Foreign Minister Kislyak confirmed to Charge that Medvedev's call for a new European security treaty, made during his June 5 Berlin visit and repeated subsequently, was an amorphous concept, with the GOR still studying next steps in Russia-European security relations. What appears to be a hastily drafted speech by the MFA has left Russian pundits unimpressed. Telling us not to over-analyze Medvedev's remarks, analysts argued that the "more civilized" tone was the speech's most important characteristic. Behind Medvedev's polite demeanor, Russian opposition to NATO enlargement remained a red-line, according to both conservative and moderate observers. Medvedev's failure to couple his rhetoric to a concrete security initiative, following a succession of protocol-heavy overseas visits, has not advanced his effort to seize ownership of the foreign policy account that Putin relished and may still eye.  
End Summary

#### Officials Concede Rhetoric Trumps Substance

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[1](#)2. (C) On the margins of Russian national day celebrations, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak told the Charge that the GOR was still deliberating over what a new "treaty on European security" might look like, following comments first floated by Medvedev during his June 5 speech in Germany and raised again during his June 11 remarks to the World Russian Press gathering. Kislyak stressed that there was no Russian concrete initiative to share with Europe or the U.S.; instead, Russia was in the early stages of deliberations over a new collective approach to European security issues. Separately, during June 11 Moscow consultations with his German counterpart, MFA Director for Disarmament and Arms Control Anatoliy Antonov did not even refer to the Medvedev quasi-proposal, focusing his remarks on sharp criticism of U.S. proposals on CFE and post-START.

[1](#)3. (C) German diplomats, pushed by Berlin to clarify what Medvedev meant by his June 5 speech, have concluded that trip dynamics trumped Russia's interagency process, producing a hastily drafted message, distinguished most by its more positive tone than any substantive shift in Russian position. The speech proposal, German Embassy officers told us, was pitched to Medvedev by FM Steinmeier during his May visit, rejected by the MFA as premature, and then resurrected by the Presidential Administration after a strenuous reclama by the German Foreign Minister. Reportedly drafted in large part by MFA European Cooperation Director Sergey Ryabkov and Policy Planning Director Kramarenko, the speech resurrected a medley of earlier Russian themes, including Gorbachev's "Vladivostok to Vancouver" moniker and Yeltsin's Common European Home, along with the sustained Russian critique of NATO and OSCE as anachronistic organizations. Political-military analysts, including those consulted by the MFA and close to the Presidential Administration, told us that they were unaware of any "real" initiative behind Medvedev's rhetoric.

¶4. (C) Despite Medvedev's insistence to the June 11 gathering of Russian-language editors that he did not deliver his Berlin address "simply to please my German audience," his rhetorical outing in Germany has left political and military analysts baffled rather than riveted. Conservative television talk show host Aleksey Pushkov was withering, expressing disappointment that Medvedev's gambit was "no Munich." The problem with choosing European security as a theme, Pushkov noted, was that only Russia was dissatisfied with the status quo institutions. In contrast to the Cold War, he noted, Russia lacked military leverage in Europe; while an important economic power and a potentially important political model (as a democratic-authoritarian alternative), Russia remained militarily insignificant except on the "fringe" issues of Abkhazia and other frozen conflicts. Reviewing at length the strong Russian strategic and psychological objections to NATO enlargement, Pushkov argued that Medvedev's speech was a failure in Russian domestic political terms. "Whether you like it or not, Russian world views -- their basic operating system -- is summed up by Putin's Munich speech."

¶5. (C) More moderate analysts and the bulk of political commentary in the press focused on Medvedev's softer tone and positively worded efforts to strike a new spirit of Euro-Atlanticism. Agreeing with Pushkov that the West should not over-interpret Medvedev's remarks, "Russia in Global Politics" Editor Fyodor Lukyanov and Moscow Times military analyst Aleksandr Golts separately argued that Medvedev had yet to tip his hand on the core issues confronting Russia, Europe, and the U.S., but stressed that the "more civilized" tone was in and of itself significant. Golts argued that Medvedev's emphasis on a new European compact could be used as a cover for standing down on missile defense and CFE; alternately, his discussion of "shared values" could be a realpolitik foil for driving a wedge between Europe and the U.S. While Golts was inclined to view Medvedev's rhetoric as a manipulative sop to the West, Lukyanov argued that we should take at face value Medvedev's polite reinforcement of serious and widespread Russian opposition to NATO expansion.

#### NATO Enlargement Matters

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¶6. (C) While Medvedev disavowed a military confrontation in the event of NATO's expansion, in contrast to more bellicose statements in the past from Putin or former Chief of the General Staff Baluyevskiy over nuclear targeting, analysts here took Medvedev's overall comments as reinforcement of the Russian red-line. Conservative editor and television host Maksim Shevchenko separately echoed the conclusion of Pushkov that Russians viewed NATO as a direct threat, as an organization that could one day redefine its interests in a manner that would lead to renewed military conflict or competition with Russia. While Pushkov underscored the common belief that Russia's naval base in Sevastopol was destined for NATO "occupation," Shevchenko argued that Ukraine was part of Russia's "intrinsic security space." Both read in Medvedev's warnings over the consequences of NATO enlargement an implicit commitment to use Russian economic, political and social levers to raise the costs for Ukraine and Georgia.

¶7. (C) Moderate analysts largely agree with the conservative view that NATO expansion remains the "poison pill" in Russia's relations with Europe and the U.S. While Golts thought Medvedev's speech carefully signaled Russia's reaction to NATO MAP to a halt in cooperation over Afghanistan, Lukyanov stressed more dire implications for a Ukrainian MAP offer. Describing Ukrainian domestic politics as "beyond the pale," Lukyanov agreed with GOR assessments that Yushchenko was using NATO membership to shore up a Ukrainian national identity that required casting Russia in the role of enemy. When Ukraine had adopted an over-the-horizon approach to NATO membership, Russia could

afford a "carrots" approach to its neighbor. With Yushchenko focused on MAP now, the gloves had come off, with Lukyanov resisting the view that the rhetoric was counterproductive. Now that revisiting the "Big Treaty" was discussed openly, Lukyanov foresaw a serious Russian debate to withdraw support for Ukraine's territorial integrity.

Comment

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18. (C) We agree with the common wisdom that Medvedev's speech was distinguished by its tone, not content, and that the new Russian President provided no basis to conclude that old Russian objections to NATO enlargement, U.S. missile defense plans, or CFE had lapsed. The high-flown rhetoric, not backed by any concrete security initiative, did not help Medvedev establish himself as the arbiter of Russia's foreign policy. After protocollary visits to Kazakhstan and China, and a substance-lite session in Berlin, Medvedev has yet to distinguish himself on the international stage, at a time when Putin's appointment of Russian Ambassador to the US Ushakov as foreign policy adviser has muddied the post-succession lines of authority.  
RUSSELL